

**General Plan 2020
Interest Group Committee Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2003**

Interest Group Committee:

Al Stehly	Farm Bureau
Bonnie Gendron	Back Country Coalition
Bruce Tabb	Environmental Development
Carolyn Chase	SD Coalition for Transportation Choices
Chris Anderson	SD Association of Realtors
Dan Silver	Endangered Habitats League
Dave Shibley	Save Our Land Values
Diane Coombs	Citizen Coordinate for Century 3
Eric Bowlby	Sierra Club
Greg Lambron	Helix Land Company
Jim Whalen	Alliance for Habitat Conservation
Karen Messer	Buena Vista Audubon Society
Lee Vance	Building Industry Association
Phil Pryde	SD Audubon Society
Terry Barker	American Society of Landscape Architects

Public at Large:

Almeda Starkey	
Carol Leone	
Charlene Ayers	
Devore Smith	Sierra Club
Dutch Van Dierendonck	Ramona CPG
Ernest Barrera	Espresso Newspaper
Gene Helsel	Julian CPG
J. Tanalski	Valley Center
Jeanne Pagett	
John Stewart	JDPG, SDRPCAC
Michael Thometz	MERIT
Parke Troutman	UCSD
Paul Ulrich	Crest View Properties
Ron Pennock	ECCC

County Staff:

Karen Scarborough (DPLU, group facilitator)
Gary Pryor (DPLU)
Ivan Holler (DPLU)
LeAnn Carmichael (DPLU)
Michelle Yip (DPLU)
Tom Harron (County Counsel)

Agenda Item I: Logistics –

a & b) Minutes for November 5 and December 17, 2002

- Baker moved to approve the minutes contingent upon the inclusion of her comments made at the December 17, 2002 meeting. Bowlby seconded. Motion passed.

Agenda Item II: Standards Package –

- Scarborough presented a proposal to move away from a “standard-by-standard” yield reduction and move toward what would be called an “open space subdivision concept”. The main concept is to try to protect areas and shift development in others, to have a new concept as to how we approach development. Holler explained the handout – how the density is broken down (i.e. semi-rural lands are 1 du/ac to 1 du/10 ac) and how lot sizes are associated with that particular density. Also presented possible uses that may occur in the open space area.
- Vance asked if these open space requirements would be in addition to those required by CEQA. Pryor responded that a CEQA issue would mean that you are mitigating due to impacts, however the intent of this proposal is to avoid environmentally sensitive areas and habitats, which would keep you out the mitigation arena.
- Vance commented that what is considered environmentally sensitive areas keeps expanding and that there are biological impacts on virtually any subdivision anywhere, even those that are up to 60 or 70% open space. Asked if the land dedicated to open space under the general plan per this proposal would satisfy CEQA. Pryor replied that that can be done today and this proposal is not changing that. Added that this proposal would not be in the general plan but rather an ordinance in zoning.
- Pryor responded to Gendron that this is truly an open space held in common, so we can start to create contiguous areas of habitat that can be managed either through conservancies or through homeowners associations. If it is done for mitigation of habitat loss, then there would be management oversight. If on the other hand, it is to be used for some sort of agricultural purpose or as a common recreation area for the homeowners, then they would be responsible for that activity themselves. Gendron asked about the possibility of developing the open space at a later time. Pryor replied that the way the ordinance would be drafted, would prevent that from happening since you would have built to your whole potential on that parcel of land. Once you set aside that open space, you would need to go through a general plan amendment to further subdivide that open space at a later date, however, it will not be easy once a map is recorded.
- In response to Vance, Silver stated that you always have to avoid resources to the maximum extent feasible when doing CEQA and that is why it is important to have the shaded areas (on handout) be the right shaded areas so there really is maximum feasible avoidance to carry right over into your CEQA determination. The only caveat would be if there were other portions of the ordinance that conflicted with this, i.e. encroachment limits into floodways and floodplains – you may not be able to get your total footprint if your site was so constrained as to be entirely within a floodplain. Agrees it should be CEQA consistent and be used for dual purposes.
- Coombs asked if the lot size in the chart indicated minimums. Holler replied that that is part of the discussion that we are here to talk about right now as it was not identified. Silver and Messer mentioned the proposed idea that if someone used small lots or did not build to their full density so that they did not use the full 25% of the development area, that area could remain available for future development.
- Silver commented that the open space percentages are not big enough in that they do not correspond to the footprint or the lot size, realizing there will be some uses in the open space, like access roads, water or sewer. Thinks more work needs to be done on the open space percentages. Stated the numbers need to be right so that the environmentalists and builders know what they are getting in terms of open space and developable area.
- Scarborough reaffirmed Shibley’s comments in that the chart is focused on subdivisions.
- Bowlby asked for clarification on yield reductions for clustering – no reductions on wetland/floodplain areas but reductions are kept on steep slopes. Scarborough replied that what remains in effect is the yield reduction calculation in RPO, which has steep slopes as a constraint so there is no new yield reduction calculation that is separate from RPO. Silver stated that yield reductions were incorporated

into the population estimates and if we were to do away with them, we would need to redo the map and reduce densities so that was left in. However, the group does not agree with yield reductions for village and village core categories and that yield reductions would need to be added for rural lands as they do not apply to rural lands anywhere under existing ordinance, however they would differ from current ordinance in that the encroachment limit would also go away. Tabb stated that he was under the impression that there were no yield reductions and steep slopes were to be identified as a sensitive resource. Messer and Whalen mentioned that there has been some obvious misunderstanding and miscommunication.

- Messer felt that it would be useful at this point to distinguish between yield reduction and encroachment limits. At one point, they were willing to let go of the encroachment limits as long as they applied to the least environmentally sensitive areas, allowing some of these innovative designs to go into the hillside. Thinks the group should review both scenarios: 1) no encroachment limits but yield reduction remains and 2) no yield reduction but encroachment limit remains, in order to see the effects of each change separately, and then a scenario where neither remains. Tabb stated that he personally does not want to see buildings encroach on ridgelines too much and would rather see the encroachment limits remain in place and the yield reduction disappear. Thinks that is more consistent with what we are trying to do in terms of planning.
- Bowlby mentioned the impacts to the circulation system. Alt. III had a failing level of service on a lot of our circulation system with the 660,000 population and removing the yield reduction would increase the problem.
- Scarborough asked Holler for a rough estimation of how the population might be modified if the yield reduction for slopes were not there. Holler replied that staff did re-run the population numbers based on the changes to the two maps – Working Copy and the Interim Interest Group. The Working Copy model is about 678,000 and the Interim Interest Group models at 706,000, in which both of these have been constrained for steep slopes in semi-rural areas only (constraint was turned on in the model). Staff also checked to see what would happen if that constraint did not exist in terms of population and saw an increase of approximately 10,000 countywide (constraint was turned off in the model). Carmichael added that even though our standards may change for floodplains and wetlands so there is no density reduction, staff felt that there were chances that you would not be able to get all of your yield due to septic constraints, etc. if your property was entirely within the floodplain. As such, floodplains and wetlands were kept as a constraint in the predictive model even though the constraints may not end up being our standard. It is a natural constraint to development so it was left in the model.
- Whalen commented that the population would go up by 1.15% if the yield reductions in slopes were eliminated. Silver replied that that 10,000 number justifies their feeling that the yield reductions should remain in semi-rural, since 10,000 people would be approximately 3,000 units or 3,000 one-acre lots. Carmichael responded that by looking at the map and the areas that are semi-rural, which are mostly located in Fallbrook, Valley Center, some North County Metro, Ramona, and Alpine, that 10,000 is not spread out over the county but rather located within these areas so it is a big number for those communities.
- Silver stated that in his view, the semi-rural in particular is a place where you would want to continue to have agriculture rather than more one-acre lots. Mentioned that one of the parts of this package is a map – a good map, in which they are mostly concerned with the rural parts. However, the Working Copy map has changed a great majority of the 1 du/80 ac to 1 du/40 ac, which is contrary to the initial principle that 1 du/80 ac would be the default in the rural areas east of the CWA. 1 du/40 ac have taken over 1 du/80 ac in major areas like Potrero, Jamul/Dulzura, and Julian. In response to Tabb, Silver added that they did propose a trade – do a good job in the rural areas and get rid of the yield reductions elsewhere, but questioned whether that was happening.
- Lambron asked what the steep slope constraints are that are being used in the model. Carmichael replied that just in the categories of 1 du/ac, 1 du/2 ac, and 1 du/4 ac, no constraint when it is 0-25%, 50% constraint for 25-50% slope (basically a one-acre to a two-acre density), and 75% constraint for over 50% slope. So it is basically a 1, 2, or 4, which mirrors the existing general plan. These slopes are based on the USGS. Lambron commented that there is a need for better encroachment ability into steep slopes in order to provide better open space. As such, he is in support of eliminating encroachment limits.
- Chase asked about the process for resolving the Circulation Element and whether we will be looking at costs. Pryor responded that we will run transportation numbers to see what roads are going to be

impacted, then some choices are going to have to be made – is there an alternative to reconstructing the road as there are some roads that may be impacted and cannot be changed physically or there may have to be a different alignment. For example, Ramona is trying to upgrade the road through the middle of town, which would impact all of the older parts of the downtown area. Because of this, they need to look at whether they want to do a bypass, go with a reduction of growth and development, or choose to have a “parking lot” during the rush hour period rather than suffering any of the other consequences. Those are some of the choices the community is going to have to make. Chase thinks we need to move into looking at costs rather than public subsidies for these alternatives. Stated that we may need to trade more development rights in different areas as a result of our inability to service circulation. Pryor responded that that kind of thought process will also take place with water and sewer systems if they are out there.

- Whalen commented that you would achieve the same results if constraints are applied to a 40- and 80-acre lot because of the lot size already.
- Bowlby commented that the amount of growth we are trying to accommodate in the unincorporated areas has increased – about 218,000 more people. Looking at the numbers that are coming forward, if you take out the factors as said, you would be looking at 13% more growth being planned in the unincorporated areas and we had failing circulation systems at 660,000. So it is not smart growth and we are getting away from steering the growth where it should be to begin with.
- Messer proposed relaxing the yield reductions and avoidance on 1 du/2 ac – that is where your population goes, and to retain the yield reductions and avoidance on 1 du/10 ac – that is our agriculture or more rural area.
- Pryde asked who decides on what is the least environmentally sensitive area for development. Pryor responded that staff will make a recommendation but that decision will probably be made by the Board.
- Silver commented on Messer’s proposal – the cut off could have been at 1 du/4 ac and 1 du/10 ac but have the split roll approach. Another thing to do would be to revise the 1 du/10 ac category to a different density range, i.e. 1 du/15 ac, to account for the yield reduction beforehand so there is no yield reduction. Mentioned that these are not minimums and that the open space figures need to correlate better or exactly in order for them to work.
- Shibley asked how many parcels there would be if we changed a number of 1 du/80 ac to 1 du/40 ac. Carmichael replied that there are some large areas in Potrero, Jamul/Dulzura, and Julian that have always had a difference between the Working Copy and Interim Interest Group maps. An example would be to look at the difference in the Interim Interest Group of 4,027 and the Working Copy of 4,200 persons. Shibley responded that the numbers were not that significant and did not think it made sense to argue about it.
- Bowlby stated that the open space that is set aside needs to be enforced in terms of its allowable use. In response to the 80-acre designation on the east side, he thinks 1,000 more people in Jamul is significant and asked if it was not, then why would the building industry be advocating more growth east of the CWA line, saying we should expand infrastructure where it is feasible.
- Messer commented that the areas that have been changed (80-acres) are areas that are part of the biggest contiguous unbroken area of the county and they are often adjacent to public land that is high of habitat value so they are important areas. The extra housing units have more impact from an environmental point of view rather than any other view, such as population.
- Scarborough stated at this point, there are several issues that need to be discussed further – 40- and 80-acre designations, yield reduction on slopes, encroachment, cost of infrastructure and the iterative process to fix what we see in the model, population, and the calculation in the open space subdivision chart, which are not minimums.
- Silver asked whether the community regional trails park was active or passive. Believes they should be passive because active recreation (soccer fields and basketball courts) needs to be in the developed areas where the people live. Vance replied that the kind of parks that would go out in that area would have to use the definitions defined in either the open space element or in one of the elements; these are not urban facilities.
- Silver stated there needs to be a way to site these facilities but not in the open space. Concerned that someone may put their development within the footprint and then decide they would like to sell their open space to have soccer fields, a golf course or RV park put in. Pryor responded that if it is a private open space, you can then impose other restrictions on it. Tabb agreed stating that the concepts or

guiding principles in the “open space subdivision” has been that the open space percentage would represent open space or ag, to not be used for anything else.

- Barker suggested removing community parks from the potential uses stating that regional parks have some kind of activity integrated into it, as it is the uses you are talking about.
- Chase asked where we are with parks, understanding that county trails are in the planning process. Asked what is thought of as active vs. passive and public vs. private. Pryor replied that what is listed here as open space is really privately held open space or it may be held under conservancy or some sort of deed restriction so you cannot develop it. There you can define what you want in terms of open space but when you begin to talk about community and regional parks and trails, that is the County and completely on public land. If it is a trail, it could be on an easement with indemnification by the property owner but the County is going to maintain it. Chase asked about clustering around golf courses and how that would be accommodated within the footprint. Tabb replied that you would need excess land as golf courses do not count as the footprint.
- Messer expressed support for striking the parks element because of private ownership. Asked the difference between ag – less intensive and intensive. Pryor replied that much like the difference between the manufacturing, sale, and repair of an automobile, ag can be separated out as different zoning classifications and be permitted in different locations. Areas with the least population would be the most desirable for mushroom farms but flower fields are compatible with semi-rural so those uses can be separated in the zoning ordinance. Currently, there is a mix where ag is not defined well.
- Vance mentioned that there are different kinds of open space and because they do not all mean the same thing, it can be easily misunderstood.
- Coombs argued for keeping regional trails in the potential uses for open space because 1) granted the regional network will almost be entirely in public land but if there is a need for a connection on private land and the landowner is willing, there needs to be flexibility and 2) feels confident there are mechanisms for defining open space and legal mechanisms for implementing this. Has issue with enforcement, as the further out in the backcountry with fewer neighbors, there are more illegal uses.

Agenda Item III: Process –

- The next Interest Group meeting will take place on January 28, 2003 from 11 – 3 pm.
- The Planning Commission hearing is being proposed for three days – January 31, February 7, and 14.

Public Comments –

- Sharon Cooney – Inviting all to the Regional Comprehensive Plan workshops, which will be hosted by Supervisors Roberts and Horn. Will take place February 10 at 6 pm at the San Marcos Community Center.
- Almeda Starkey – Asked for the definition of group quarters. Group quarters include farm worker housing, labor camps, military installations, homeless shelters, etc. Asked who on County staff was accountable for the changes from 1 du/80 ac to 1 du/40 ac. Pryor replied that there has been no official change, that it is a work in progress and that the number could have come from a number of recommendations. The ultimate decision will come from the Board of Supervisors.
- Gene Helsel – The Julian CPG took the 1 du/40 ac and changed it to 1 du/80 ac on the Working Copy map, which is consistent with the Interim Interest Group map and will also maintain the rural aspect of the Julian community and work into equity mechanisms. 200 people translates into 75 to 77 houses in which the cumulative effects of houses in terms of increased noise and light makes a difference in their community.